

## Background on Bikini Atoll Issues

- In 1946 the U.S. Navy moved the 167 people of Bikini in the Marshall Islands off their atoll in order to use it as a testing ground for nuclear weapons. Asking if the Bikinians “would . . . be willing to sacrifice their island[s] for the welfare of all men,” a Navy commodore explained that America was “trying to learn how to use the atomic bomb for the good of mankind . . . .”
- The U.S. tested 23 atomic and hydrogen bombs at Bikini Atoll from 1946-1958, with a total yield equal to the equivalent of nearly one Hiroshima-type bomb per day for 12 years. The lethal fallout from just one of those tests – the 1954 Bravo shot – covered 50,000 square miles, equal to the size of Massachusetts. If Bravo had been detonated in Washington, DC and the fallout pattern had headed in a northeasterly direction, it would have killed everyone from Washington to New York, while near-lethal levels of fallout would have stretched to the Canadian border.
- During the nuclear testing program and into the 1980s, the Bikinians were wards of the United States under a United Nations trusteeship, under which the U.S. pledged to care for them and “protect [them] against the loss of their land and resources.”
- Thanks in large part to the testing program at Bikini Atoll, the United States fought the Soviet Union to a nuclear testing stalemate and eventually won the Cold War.
- The U.S. government moved the people of Bikini five times in four decades, even carelessly back to Bikini following President Johnson’s 1968 announcement that the atoll was safe. The Bikinians themselves had to sue the United States to be moved off, and after medical tests by U.S. doctors revealed that the people had ingested the largest amounts of radioactive material of any known population, the islanders were moved again in 1978.
- The U.S. never discharged its fiduciary obligations to the Bikinians, so the Bikinians brought lawsuits in the 1980s seeking compensation for the taking of their lands and to obtain a radiological cleanup of Bikini. Congress provided some compensation in settlement of one lawsuit and provided additional funds in the mid-1980s under a Compact of Free Association with the Marshall Islands (“Compact”), pursuant to which the U.S. “accepte[d] responsibility for compensation owing to” the people of Bikini.
- Under the Compact, the U.S. established and funded a Nuclear Claims Tribunal to render “final determination upon all claims past, present and future,” of the citizens of the Marshall Islands arising out of the nuclear testing program, but provided it with only \$45.75 million. After seven years of litigation, the Tribunal awarded the people of Bikini \$563 million – after it deducted about \$195 million for compensation payments already made to the Bikinians by the U.S. Government. However, due to its inadequate funding from the United States, the Tribunal was able to pay the Bikinians only \$2,279,000, or less than one-half of one percent of their award.
- Partial payments by the United States to the Bikinians neither removes nor exonerates America’s displacement of these people 63 years ago and rendering the atoll uninhabitable. This odyssey will not end until the people of Bikini are back living safely on their islands. Today, the 3,500

Bikinians remain exiled from their homeland. They are scattered throughout the Marshall Islands and the rest of the Pacific, and several hundred have become U.S. citizens and live in the United States. The largest concentrations of Bikinians in the United States are in Springdale (AR), Salem (OR), Spokane (WA), Enid (OK), and Honolulu and Hilo (HI). In fact, several Bikinians are serving the U.S. in uniform overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan.

- Congress should honor America's obligations to the nuclear nomads of Bikini Atoll. The U.S. Government moved the Bikinians off their islands to help win the Cold War, and it should close the books by paying for the radiological cleanup of these islands, which remain contaminated.
- The U.S. State Department has reported that radiological cleanup "strategies [are] estimated to cost from \$217 million to \$1.4 billion for Bikini [Atoll]."
- Using a cleanup method recommended by the U.S. Department of Energy's contractor, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, the Bikinians believe that it will be possible to conduct an adequate radiological cleanup of their atoll for about \$250 million, and they are willing to abandon all remaining claims against the U.S. in return for the establishment of a cleanup trust fund that will enable them to return home.
- There are other nuclear victims in the Marshall Islands from other atolls who will also seek additional compensation from the Congress, but it is important to note that all of them are living back on their home islands. Only the Bikinians remain homeless.

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March 27, 2009

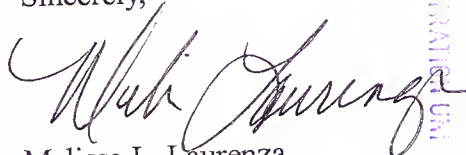
Mr. Jeffrey Gilday  
Registration Unit  
Department of Justice  
Public Office-9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
1400 New York Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Mr. Gilday:

On behalf of Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, LLP, in compliance with the Foreign Agent Registration Act of 1938, as amended, we hereby file copies of information disseminated on behalf of the Kili/Bikini/Ejit Local Government Council.

Please return a stamped copy of this filing to the waiting messenger. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding this submission.

Sincerely,



Melissa L. Laurenza

2009 MAR 27 PM 12:03  
COMM-F/REGISTRATION UNIT

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These materials are distributed by Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld on behalf of the Kili/Bikini/Ejit Local Government Council. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.



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- The U.S. State Department has reported that radiological cleanup "strategies [are] estimated to cost from \$217 million to \$1.4 billion for Bikini [Atoll]."
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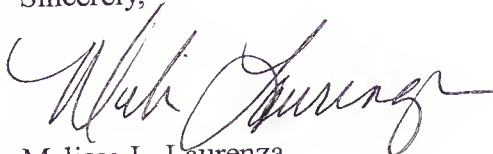
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